

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the: World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

EDITOR: JOHN GARRETT · 17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU · GENEVA · SWITZERLAND
TEL. 36 71 30 · CABLES OIKOUMENE
U.S. ENQUIRIES: 156 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK 10, N. Y., USA

No. 11/25th Year

March 21st, 1958

On Other Pages

- World Presbyterian Leader Says Czech Churches Active Page 2
German Church Synod Urged to Take Stand on Atomic Warfare. . . . Page 3
Bishop Indicates Differences Between Church & Communists Page 4
Views on IMC/WCC Unification Page 4

A Special Report

- Christian Voices Defend Condemned French Pastor. Page 7

Archbishop Hits South African Migrant Labour System

(Cape Town, South Africa) - South Africa's system of migratory labour which involves the separation of husbands and wives is "devilish" and must be resisted by all Christians, according to Dr. Joost de Blank, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town.

Under the present Native Urban Areas Act, African women cannot enter urban areas without an official certificate, which means that families are broken up when husbands leave the reserves to work in the cities. It is possible for wives to get certificates only after their husbands have worked in an urban area for at least two years. The permits can be cancelled on a month's notice.

"The fight is now on," Dr. de Blank said. "Christian people everywhere are bound by virtue of their faith to fight the evils of a migrant labour force. We can no longer tolerate a state of affairs where family units are deliberately broken up by government decree."

"The family is the basic Christian unit - in truth, not a Christian unit only, but a natural, biological unit - and anyone who of set purpose wrecks the family is fighting against God. Christians have to withstand the enemies of God's law by every legitimate means."

Dr. de Blank, writing in the publication "Africa South", said he had been told by a government official that the chances of an African finding work in the reserves and living with his family are "exceedingly remote".

"The whole system of migratory labour," the Archbishop wrote, "has corrupted the Union and should be uprooted. It has degraded the African, but not nearly so much as it has degraded the European who condones and encourages it."

E.P.S., Geneva

World Presbyterian Leader Says Czech Churches Active

(Geneva) - Dr. Marcel Pradervand, general secretary of the World Presbyterian Alliance, has reported that the two member churches of the Alliance in Czechoslovakia are "most anxious to maintain and develop their present contacts with churches abroad". He said they were "interested in all the problems facing other churches in different parts of the world".

Dr. Pradervand made his statement after a week spent in Czechoslovakia from March 4 - 10 as the result of an invitation from the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Reformed Church of Slovakia, both members of the Alliance.

Describing his visits to Prague and Bratislava, the Presbyterian leader said he had discussions with Church leaders and government officials. He was given government assurances that delegates from both Czech churches would be allowed to travel next year to attend the eighteenth General Council of the World Alliance from July 27 to August 6, at Campinas, Brazil.

As examples of "the vitality of the Czechoslovak churches" and "their sense of responsibility for their own people", Dr. Pradervand referred to a congregation of about two thousand to which he preached in the town of Komarno, and to plans for sixteen regional conferences for men and women elders during the month of March this year. Theme of the local meetings, at which altogether three thousand participants are expected, is "The Reformed Doctrine of the Sacraments and Our Congregational Life".

E.P.S., Geneva

Committee Named to Administer \$4,000,000 IMC Grant

(New York) - Thirteen world Christian leaders have been asked by the International Missionary Council to help administer a \$4,000,000 fund for the advancement of theological education in Africa, Asia and Latin America (see EPS No. 1).

The fund is the result of a \$2,000,000 grant announced earlier this year and made available on March 14 by the Sealantic Fund, together with pledges for a "matching" \$2,000,000, a condition of the Sealantic grant, from nine United States church mission agencies.

Asked to join representatives of the donor agencies in administering the money are Professor Christian Baeta of Ghana, Dr. D.G. Moses, India, President Hachiro Yuasa, Japan, Bishop Proculo Rodriguez, the Philippines, Professor Walter Freytag, Germany, Canon Oliver Tomkins and Dr. J.W.C. Dougall, United Kingdom, the Very Rev. J.S. Thomson, Canada, Dr. Benjamin Moraes, Brazil, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, Dr. John A. Mackay, Dean Liston Pope and Dr. H.P. Van Dusen, United States.

The fund, which will begin operating in July, 1958, will be directed primarily at strengthening theological seminaries of the younger churches. In addition to the institutional programme, the fund will be used to improve the libraries of theological schools and to develop a plan for the production and translation of text books.

Plans call for spending the present resources of the fund over a period of five years. Dr. Charles W. Ranson, present IMC general secretary, was named director of the fund by the International Missionary Council Assembly at its meeting in Ghana in January.

Pledges to the fund have come from mission boards of the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church USA, American Baptist Convention, Congregational Church, Protestant Episcopal Church, Disciples of Christ, the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the United Lutheran Church. E.P.S., Geneva

North American Baptists Plan Evangelism "Advance"

(Chicago) - Leaders of seven major Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada, representing more than 17 million members, are convinced that the co-operative efforts of their denominations during the 1959-64 Baptist Jubilee Advance Programme "will do much to strengthen our unity and our witness, resolve our differences and clear away any misunderstandings".

Meeting to make plans for the Advance - a six-year mass evangelism effort - the committee members said they "are of one mind in the conviction that all North American Baptists need a deepening of devotion to Jesus Christ, a quickening of evangelistic zeal, a worthier level of stewardship and a more vital and fruitful life".

The Advance opens with watchnight prayer services on New Year's Eve, 1958-59. During the entire Advance, Baptist bodies will hold special meetings, rallies and other events. The final year of the observance, 1964, will mark the 150th anniversary of organised Baptist work on a national scale in North America. Participating groups are the American Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist General Conference of America, North American Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention of America, National Baptist Convention, USA, and Baptist Federation of Canada. E.P.S., Geneva

German Church Synod Urged to Take Stand on Atomic Warfare

(Berlin) - A group of German Christians around the "Church Brotherhoods" has urged the synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) to take a stand against nuclear armament and atomic warfare.

The demand is made in a set of ten basic principles on which the synod is asked to express its agreement or disagreement.

A letter accompanying the document says previous statements of the synod had not given a clear enough lead. It called for a clear practical statement for the guidance of individual Christians who must "place their confidence in the reality of God's Word rather than in political calculations".

The questions put had been signed by 364 people, and was supported by the "brotherhoods" in the churches of Hessen-Nassau, Northwest Germany, the Rhineland, Westphalia and Wurttemberg as well as groups of theologians in Lower Saxony and the Palatinate.

The synod will meet at some time in April yet to be fixed. E.P.S., Geneva

Bishop Indicates Differences Between Church and Communists

(Dresden, Germany) - Bishop Gottfried Noth of Saxony told his church's synod that public statements issued in East Germany calling socialism incompatible with religious concepts put the Christian's conscience in "a difficult position".

The bishop declared that the life of the Church is not bound to a particular economic or social order, and that the Christian in the German Democratic Republic (DDR) must be expected to face up seriously to the questions raised by socialism. But he said the crucial question came when God was discussed.

Expressing gratitude to many who had declined to undergo the Communist, state-sponsored "youth dedication ceremonies", Bishop Noth said their stand had shown the real nature of baptism and confirmation, but he added that the Church must strengthen and improve religious instruction given before confirmation.

In parts of his report the bishop drew attention to grave shortages of pastors and social workers in the Church of Saxony. E.P.S., Geneva

Views on IMC/WCC Unification

(Geneva) - Reactions to recent action by the International Missionary Council's Assembly when it approved "in principle" the integration of the IMC and the World Council of Churches have been registered in several countries.

In New York, the Executive Board of the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA has welcomed the action taken by the Ghana Assembly of the IMC. The board recommended that its member boards "inform their constituencies of the reasons which have led to the formulation of the plan of integration" and urged them to "take the necessary supporting actions".

The Danish paper "Kristeligt Dagblad" says the decision is a consequence of the realisation that Church and mission are inextricably bound up with one another. "No violence is being done to the individual church or its conception of the Gospel," the paper writes, and says it hopes that opposition in Sweden and Norway will not influence the attitude of the Danish Church.

At the same time, the chairman of the Norwegian Missionary Council, Mr. Tormod Vagen, in a statement to the Christian daily in Bergen, "Dagen", said that he expects a proposal to be made to establish a new independent missionary council made up of the councils which oppose the integration of the IMC and the WCC. Mr. Vagen said that he expects integration to be carried out and predicted that the Norwegian Missionary Council will withdraw from the IMC. "These people will not rest. The ecumenical spirit is so strong at present that it resembles a kind of obsession. All considerations are cast aside for this one end - to merge everything together," he concluded.

The Protestant Council in the Congo decided at its annual meeting in February to withdraw from the International Missionary Council, with which it had been linked from its own inception. The reason given was a desire not to sever connections with fundamentalist "faith missions" at work in the Congo, which do not approve of the World Council of Churches. Some missions and missionaries within the Congo Council have expressed regret at the decision to withdraw because of the close ties they have with both IMC and WCC. E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

A church built in the shape of a gigantic fish - ancient Christian symbol - has been dedicated in Stamford, Connecticut. The \$1,500,000 Presbyterian church rises sixty feet at its highest point. On both sides of its 234-foot length are 20,000 jig-saw stained glass window-panes made in Chartres, France, and representing the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

* *

The Ecumenical Council of Finland arranged services of worship for English, French, German and Swedish skiers on March 2 during the world championship skiing race held at Lahti, Finland, from March 1 to 9.

* *

Thirty-one white ministers in Mobile, Alabama, have endorsed a petition of thirty-six Negro ministers asking for an end to segregation on city buses. The white pastors said they were "impressed" by the sincerity of the Negro ministers, and added: "We commend the proposal that they have made to you as an intelligent means for achieving goals whose inevitable realisation must now be apparent to all thinking people".

* *

The Rev. A.S. Jones, British Methodist missionary, was assaulted, robbed and thrown from a speeding train while travelling to Darjeeling, India, early this month. Found by police alongside the railroad track near Siliguri, Mr. Jones was flown to a hospital in Calcutta. He is a field secretary of the British Methodist Missionary Society and has been in India for seventeen years.

* *

More than a million Finnish marks (over 4,000 dollars) were given by parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Orthodox Church and the Methodist Church for inter-church aid in Finland's first ecumenical offering. The money will be sent to the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches.

* *

Leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa have denied as "malicious nonsense" reports that in a new Afrikaans translation of the Bible, parts of the Song of Solomon have been rewritten to comply with South Africa's segregation laws. The passage in question reads in many versions, "I am black but comely". In the new Afrikaans translation it reads, "I am burnt brown". But, comments one of the translators, Professor B.B. Keet, the same words were used in a 1933 translation and similar translations can be found in the new American Revised Standard Version, the 1956 Douay version and the 1949 Knox translation.

* *

The establishment of an "Anne Frank Foundation" was announced by Radio Bavaria during the celebration of this year's "brotherhood week" in Germany, March 9 - 16, by the Hebrew-Christian Alliance. Awards will go to Jewish students, scientists and artists.

* *

Manchester journalist Mark Gibbs has been appointed chairman of the ecumenical study group of the German Evangelical Kirchentag, succeeding Dr. Franklin Littell of Bad Godesberg, Germany, who will become a professor at the University of Atlanta, USA.

* *

A booklet listing important ecumenical statements on "The Churches and Nuclear Weapons", published last month by the Ecumenical Council of Finland, sold out in four days. The second printing of the booklet, which includes the statement made in 1957 by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches advocating multilateral or unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons, was issued early in March.

* *

For the first time a delegation of fifteen pastors and laymen from the French Reformed Church has been invited to the meetings of the Free Church Federal Council in the United Kingdom. The Council, meeting at Folkestone, was addressed by World Council of Churches' general secretary W.A. Visser 't Hooft. The French delegation was led by Pastor Paul Conord, general secretary of the French Reformed Church, who preached in the "Huguenot chapel" of Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, March 16.

* *

Pastor Henrik Hauge, director of the Norwegian Institute for Inter-Church Relations, returned to Geneva on March 17 from Cyprus where he inquired into ways in which the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches could help the Christian communities on the island. Pastor Hauge, whose visit was made at the request of the division's Administrative Committee, reported that he was cordially received and was able to make extensive visits to Christian churches and institutions.

* *

The editor of "The Catholic World", the Rev. John B. Sheerin, has said that he hopes the World Council of Churches "will be so successful that it will go out of business". Speaking in New York, he said that "a total return to the one fold" of the Roman Catholic Church would be the result of Protestant unity, but added that "it will take a long time" to convert the United States to Catholicism. Dr. Sheerin was a Roman Catholic observer at last year's North American Conference on Faith and Order.

* *

A consultation organised by the Finnish Ecumenical Council to exchange information about the proposed integration of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council will be held in Finland. Pentecostalist missionary groups, members of the Finnish Missionary Council, are opposed to the integration.

* *

Pastor Konrad Möckel of a Lutheran church at Kronstadt (Orasul Stalin), Siebenbürgen, Rumania, has been arrested by security police on undisclosed charges. He has not, as far as is known, taken sides on political questions.

* *

A group of forty well-known figures in the public life of West Germany have formed a working committee to oppose "death through nuclear warfare". They have appealed to the West German government not to take part in the atomic armaments race, and to support attempts to establish an atom-free zone in Europe. Signatories include Professors Helmut Gollwitzer and Hans Iwand, Dr. Heinz Kloppenburg, Pastor Martin Niemöller and several members of the parliament in Bonn. E.P.S., Geneva

A Special ReportChristian Voices Defend Condemned French Pastor

Pastor Etienne Mathiot, who had been accused of sheltering Si Ali, an active member of the Algerian rebel National Liberation Front (FLN) and taking him to Switzerland, was condemned by the French court at Besançon on March 14 to eight months' imprisonment (see EPS Nos. 1 and 10).

Two others tried at the same time, Francine Rapiné, a young Catholic girl student, and Ben Abderhamane, an Algerian student, were both sentenced on charges of aiding the Algerian rebels. Francine Rapiné was condemned to three years imprisonment and Ben Abderhamane to three months.

The sentences were imposed after the court had reserved judgment for a week. The judges found that Pastor Mathiot had "gone beyond the normal limits of the right of asylum which he had intended to honour" because he was aware that Si Ali was sought by the police. "Such acts," the judgment said, "cannot be justified by invoking ideological sentiments as has been done by the accused - right of asylum, the exercise of Christian charity even towards one's enemies, the need for North Africans to escape the police or other agents. In fact Pastor Mathiot knowingly helped Francine Rapiné in obviously treasonable activity and inevitably himself must incur a rather serious prison sentence."

At the trial a group of well-known witnesses testified on behalf of Pastor Mathiot. They supported the five hundred letters written by Christians to say that Mathiot is recognized in the area where he works for his practical Christian conduct and bearing. Practically all the witnesses took a stand against the use of torture and the prosecution of the war in Algeria.

Pastor Georges Casalis of Strasbourg, recently back from Algeria, told the court: "In Algeria magistrates of integrity are beside themselves; they don't know what to do any more. People are tortured as soon as they are arrested. Mathiot's arrest has not surprised me. For a long time he has been confronting us all with questions of real gravity. There are valid and objective motives that justify acts like his. We belong to a generation of Christians torn between two forms of violence and we reject such a monstrous state of affairs. It is much better to be ready to compromise oneself, to open the eyes of our neighbours and save the honour of our country. There can be no question of remaining 'pure' in this dramatic situation."

M. André Philip, former minister in the fighting French government, said he had heard Mathiot preach at St. Etienne on "what he referred to as 'Pilatism'". He has refused to be a Judas or a Pontius Pilate," said M. Philip. "He has chosen to be a good Samaritan. Above all he is an obedient man. There are tortures worse than death because they destroy the soul. That is what he has resisted. As French minister in London I once dismissed certain magistrates and police officers who have since made a brilliant career for themselves! I am opposed to secret police who make a mockery of justice."

M. Nicolay, executive officer of the local temperance organisation, the Blue Cross, at Belfort, concluded his testimony in favour of the accused pastor by bursting out, "Since M. Mathiot went to prison we have lost a great soul at Belfort".

Writing in the Paris daily, "Le Monde", on the significance of the trial, Professor Roger Mehl of the Strasbourg faculty of theology described the proceedings as "putting on trial the general recourse to the use of torture in Algeria". The article in "Le Monde" concluded: "The moment comes when one must obey God rather than men even though one knows that the moral, if not legal, violation of the customary rules ensuring national solidarity is a grave matter."

Paul Ricoeur has written of the accused man that 'his case arises from the invocation of an ethic of distress'. Whatever the outcome of the trial we all have a duty to demand of the state and the government that they should no longer tolerate the perpetual submission of the French conscience to the strains imposed by such appalling situations, the cruel choices arising in such tight corners. Let us be under no illusion: while the system of torture is with us, so long as there is no just settlement to end the war in Algeria, there will be more of these situations. It is not the state's business to tear men's consciences in pieces."

Pastor Albert Finet writes in the French weekly "Réforme": "So many things happen daily in France and in the world that the Besançon trial might fade into the forgetfulness that hides a multitude of facts; but I doubt it. In the small space of this narrow room were respected men, knowledgeable and holding important posts. A young and fiery crowd made its indictment of those in power, or, at the very least, of those among them responsible for a policy judged to be disastrous and unworthy. And the appointed defenders of the group in power were not at all sure of their case. It is a sign."

Under the heading "Guilty of Christianity" the Roman Catholic French weekly "Témoignage Chrétien", writes: "It has happened that two authentic Christians have quite simply put again to the world of the little Caesars the explicit problem of the right claimed by the Christian conscience; to exist as such, with its proper claims, which are so exorbitant in the opinion of all who, to use the expression of one of the lawyers, 'want us to change our ideals every time the government changes its policy'". E.P.S., Geneva

Recent Periodicals

The Student World

"Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement" is the title of the first 1958 issue of The Student World, magazine of the World's Student Christian Federation. Metropolitan James of Melita, the representative in Geneva of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and of the Orthodox Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, has contributed the leading article, and Francis House has written on "The Federation, the Ecumenical Movement and the Eastern Churches". Heikki Kirkinen, a lecturer in the Orthodox Priests' Seminary in Finland and a member of the WSCF Executive Committee, has described the reaction of Orthodox students to the ecumenical encounter, and Father C.-J. Dumont deals with "Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox Churches". Other articles are entitled "Worship in the Ecumenical Movement - An Orthodox View", "Bible and Tradition in the Orthodox Church", "The Place and Significance of the Congregation in Orthodoxy", "Russian Orthodoxy Today", "Ancient Oriental Churches Today, Their Unity and Divisions", and "The Syrian Churches in India".

World Communiqué

The Inter-Movement Aid programme of the World Alliance of YMCAs is reviewed in an issue of World Communiqué just published by the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva. Following the call to all national YMCA movements at the 1955 World Centennial Conference at Paris, 25 new fraternal secretaries representing 12 movements have gone to serve with YMCAs in 22 countries. This Centennial Extension Programme appealed to every association to undertake greatly increased efforts for multiplying urgently needed developments, so that the YMCA might bear more effective Christian witness locally, nationally and around the world.

The publication reports that the North American YMCAs' World Service Programme, with an annual budget of over 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ million dollars, has 46 men serving in 27 countries. Many of the larger and smaller national movements are taking renewed and active interest in the YMCAs' Inter-Movement Aid programme.

E.P.S., Geneva